

EXHIBIT “I”

caste

NOUN

FACTSHEET

What does the noun *caste* mean?

There are **eight** meanings listed in OED's entry for the noun *caste*, one of which is labelled obsolete. See 'Meaning & use' for definitions, usage, and quotation evidence.

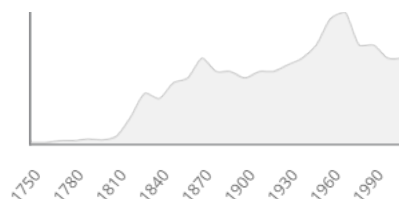
caste has developed meanings and uses in subjects including

taxonomy (mid 1700s)

insects (1830s)

How common is the noun *caste*?

About **20** occurrences per million words in modern written English



How is the noun *caste* pronounced?

BRITISH ENGLISH

/kɑːst/

kahsst

/kɑst/

kasst

U.S. ENGLISH

/kæst/

kasst

Where does the noun *caste* come from?

The earliest known use of the noun *caste* is in the mid 1500s.

OED's earliest evidence for *caste* is from 1555, in the writing of William Waterman.

caste is of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from Spanish. Partly a borrowing from Portuguese.

Etymons: Spanish *casta*, Portuguese *casta*.



MEANING & USE

1. † A group or class of people regarded as having properties or attributes in common; *esp.* 1555–1812 a group considered as having a common origin or comprising a nation, community, ethnic group, etc.; a people. *Obsolete.*

In some contexts difficult to distinguish from other senses, *esp.* 2a and (in later use) 4a; see also **cast** *n.* XII.40a.

1555 The Nabatheens..Their **caste** is wittye in winning of substaunce [Latin *in quaerendis opibus mira gentis industria*].

W. Waterman, translation of J. Boemus, *Fardle of Facions* ii. i. 118

...

1812 *Mangaches*, a **cast** of Zambos, descendants of the Indians and Negroes.

G. A. Thompson, *Geographical & Historical Dictionary of America & West Indies* vol. II. 440/2

- 2.a. Any of the (usually hereditary) classes or social ranks into which Hindu society is traditionally divided; a class of this sort forming part of a hierarchical social structure traditional in some parts of South Asia; (sometimes) *spec.* any of the four classes of the varna system (cf. **varna** *n.*). **a1624–**

The ancient Hindu texts discuss four classes or *varnas* (see **varna** *n.*) which have social functions. While the *varnas* are constantly four in number, and are not always considered hereditary, there are hundreds of other caste divisions, whose status in relation to the *varnas* is often disputed (cf. **jati** *n.* 2). Membership of a caste is traditionally determined by paternity, and dictates marriage, employment possibilities, and social interaction according to a system that ranks occupations and activities by their degree of spiritual pollution. Those tasks perceived as the most polluting have traditionally been undertaken by a fifth group considered to be outside the varna system (cf. **Dalit** *n.*, **Scheduled Caste** *n.*).

Often with modifying word expressing ranking within a hierarchy, as *higher*, *lower*, etc.

a1624 The Banians kill nothing: there are thirtie and odde seuerall Casts of these that differ something in Religion, and may not eat with each other; but all burne their dead.
N. Withington in S. Purchas, *Pilgrimes* (1625) vol. I. iv. viii. 485

...

2014 Her life was not easy, but as a *devadasi* she had..escaped the brutal stigmatisation of her caste.
S. Dharmapala, *Saree* (2015) 326

2.b. A person's rank or position as defined by membership of a caste (sense 2a); hierarchical ranking of this sort operating as a social institution or system. **1756-**

Often with modifying word expressing the ranking.

1756 The vulgar Notion they have is, that the Wife loses her Cast, if she refuses to burn, and is thrown out and despised by her Family.
Journal Voy. East Indies 13

...

2016 If it wasn't for my caste and poverty, no one could have separated us.
A. Verma, *Broken Man* 159

3.a. A breed or variety of (domesticated) animal, esp. regarded in terms of superiority or inferiority to others. **1759-**

In later use frequently simply an extended use of sense 2a.

1759 *Breed*, a species of animals; a cast; or kind. Offspring, applied to mankind. That which is produced at one hatching.
W. Rider, *New Universal English Dictionary*

...

2007 The story of mixed-breed dogs is often a sad one. Many people see them as a lower caste of animal—with no heritage and an unknown future.
M. Fields-Babineau, *Mixed Breeds for Dummies* i. 11

taxonomy

3.b. Zoology. Each of several classes or types of individual present in the communities of animals with a highly developed social (eusocial) organization, such as ants, termites, or certain mole-rats, being characterized by their behaviour and their role in reproduction, and often morphologically distinct. **1832-**

- 1832** It is fair to conclude that the soldiers compose a peculiar **caste** [of termites], and represent, in some measure in genus, the neuters of the ants and bees.
E. Griffith et al., *Cuvier's Animal Kingdom* vol. XV. 345
...
- 2005** Eusocial animals exhibit such characteristics as division of reproductive labour between **castes**, cohabiting generations and cooperative behaviour.
Nature 3 March 36/2

insects

4. In extended use.

- 4.a.** A distinct class or rank in any society, *esp.* one characterized by hereditary exclusivity. **1791–**
More generally: any group of people considered as forming a socially or economically distinct, exclusive, or restricted unit.

- 1791** In France they [*sc.* the Nobles] formed an immense insulated **cast**, separated from society by every barrier that prejudice or policy could raise.
J. Mackintosh, *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* iv. 255
...
- 2020** We are slowly creating a **caste** of permanently undocumented Latino people in the United States.
New York Times (Nexis) 1 December (Opinion section)

- 4.b.** Status, position, or rank within a community or social hierarchy; (also) a hierarchical system of social organization based on this. **1816–**

- 1816** Blunted sensibility—renewed excesses—loss of **cast** in society—follow each other in melancholy succession.
Times 8 July 3/2
...
- 2014** Racialized slavery was only the first in a series of ‘peculiar institutions’..to enforce **caste** and class in the United States.
New York Times Magazine 12 October 14/1

- 5.** In contexts relating to Spanish territories in the Americas in the 18th and early 19th centuries: any of several groups or classes of people distinguished chiefly on the basis of **1822–**

racial heritage or descent; (occasionally) a person of mixed heritage belonging to such a group. Now *historical*.

The Spanish term *casta* is now more often used in discussions of this topic; cf. *casta n*.

In quot. 1758, perhaps a general use in sense 1 used to render the Spanish word.

- [1758] Its inhabitants..may be divided into different casts or tribes [Spanish *varias Castas*], who derive their origin from a coalition of whites, negroes and Indians.
J. Adams, translation of A. de Ulloa, *Voyage to South-America* vol. I. i. iv. 30]
- 1822 The *castes*, that is to say, the *mestizos*, descendants of whites and Indians; *mulattoes*, descendants of whites and negroes; *samboes*, descendants of negroes and Indians—are scattered all over the country as labourers.
J. R. Poinsett, *Diary* 9 November in *Notes on Mexico* (1824) x. 120
...
- 2019 Many vectors come together in Mulattos' and other *castes* evolving identities.
Hispania vol. 102 590

historical

Phrases

to lose caste: to be ostracized from or censured by one's caste, typically for behaviour considered unacceptable to that group; to lose the social position and status conferred by membership of a caste; (hence, in extended use) to fall in the estimation of a community, society, or group; to decline in reputation. **1794–**

- 1794 One of the Rev. Mr. Brown's people at Calcutta..told him that if he would be baptized, and *lose Cast*, he would give him some support.
W. Carey, *Letter* 3 January in *Baptist Reg. for 1794–7* (?1797) 163
...
- 2002 Candida has '*lost caste*' by buying a small flat at the wrong end of Ladbroke Grove, dark, dirty and menacing.
Independent 29 October 14/1

ETYMOLOGY

Summary

Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from Spanish. Partly a borrowing from Portuguese.

Etymons: Spanish *casta*, Portuguese *casta*.

Partly (i) (originally) < **Spanish** *casta* breed or species of animal (15th cent.), class of people, lineage (c1500; in the former Spanish territories of the Americas also with specific reference to ethnic origin: 1748 in the passage translated in quot. 1758 at sense 5),

and partly (ii) (in sense 2) < its cognate **Portuguese** *casta* class of people in India (1516; 15th cent. in sense ‘breed or species of animal’),

both of uncertain origin, probably either (a) respectively < **Spanish** *casta*, feminine of *casto* pure, chaste, and its **Portuguese** cognate, < **classical Latin** *castus* (feminine *casta*) pure, unpolluted (see **chaste** *adj.*; if so, apparently with associations of an unmixed lineage),

or (b) < an unattested (probably **Gothic**) reflex of the **Germanic** base of **Old Icelandic** *kǫstr* pile, heap (see **cast** *v.*), via an assumed sense ‘group of animals’ (compare the semantic development of **cast** *n.* III.14).

Compare **cast** *n.* XII.40, from which early uses (especially in form *cast*) are sometimes difficult to distinguish.

With sense 5 compare **casta** *n.*

Notes

Compare **Catalan** *casta*, noun (15th cent.), cognate with the **Spanish** and **Portuguese** words, and also (< **Portuguese**) **French** *caste* class of people (1615), class in Hindu society (1659), class in society more generally (1790), **Dutch** *kaste* group or class of people (1641 as *casta* with reference to the Portuguese people; 1743 with reference to India).

In the form *caste* in later use probably reinforced by **French** *caste*.

PRONUNCIATION

BRITISH ENGLISH

/kɑːst/ 

kahsst

/kast/ 

kasst

U.S. ENGLISH

/kæst/ 

kasst

FORMS

Variant forms

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1500s–1800s | cast |
| 1500s; 1700s– | caste |

FREQUENCY

caste is one of the 5,000 most common words in modern written English. It is similar in frequency to words like *beer*, *click*, *defeat*, and *explicit*.

It typically occurs about 20 times per million words in modern written English.

caste is in frequency band 6, which contains words occurring between 10 and 100 times per million words in modern written English. [More about OED's frequency bands](#)

Frequency of *caste*, *n.*, 1750–2010

* Occurrences per million words in written English

Historical frequency series are derived from Google Books Ngrams (version 2), a data set based on a corpus of several million books printed in English between 1500 and 2010. The Ngrams data has been cross-checked against frequency measures from other corpora, and re-analysed in order to handle homographs and other ambiguities.

The overall frequency for a given word is calculated by summing frequencies for the main form of the word, any plural or inflected forms, and any major spelling variations.

Frequency of *caste*, *n.*, 2017–2023

* Occurrences per million words in written English

Modern frequency series are derived from a corpus of 20 billion words, covering the period from 2017 to the present. The corpus is mainly compiled from online news sources, and covers all major varieties of World English.

Smoothing has been applied to series for lower-frequency words, using a moving-average algorithm. This reduces short-term fluctuations, which may be produced by variability in the content of the corpus.

COMPOUNDS & DERIVED WORDS

Sort by

low-caste, adj. 1681-

half-caste, n. & adj. 1758-

Now somewhat dated and usually considered offensive. A person of mixed race or descent; esp. a person with one white and one dark-skinned parent; (sometimes spec. (chiefly in India during British rule))...

sub-caste, n. 1800-

caste mark, n. 1807-

A symbol worn by a Hindu, typically made on the forehead with powder or paste, which indicates something about the wearer such as membership of a...

caste system, n. 1816-

A system of social stratification which divides a population into classes regarded as superior or inferior to one another, typically on the basis of...

high-caste, adj. 1820-

casteless, adj. 1821-

Of a society, nation, etc.: that does not have a caste system; not bound by a rigidly hierarchical or stratified social structure; that does not...

slave caste, n. 1821-

A hereditary class or social group whose members have traditionally been made to work as slaves.

caste-like, adj. 1832-

Characteristic of, resembling, or suggestive of a caste or caste system.

castehood, n. 1836-

The state or condition of belonging to a caste; membership of a particular caste or class of people.

outcaste, adj. & n. 1838-

Belonging to no caste; segregated from the rest of society.

warrior-caste, n. 1842–

discaste, v. 1847–

transitive. Chiefly in Indian contexts: to exclude (a person) from a caste; to cause (a person) to become excluded. Cf. caste, n. 2.

soldier-caste, n. 1847–

casteism, n. 1852–

Adherence to or belief in a caste system or a similarly hierarchical system of social organization; prejudice or discrimination on the basis of caste...

quarter-caste, n. & adj. 1859–

(a) n. A person of mixed ancestry who is a quarter from one descent and three-quarters from another, spec. (Australian and New Zealand) a person who...

outcaste, v. 1867–

transitive. To expel (a person) from his or her caste; to deprive of caste; to cause to lose caste. Also reflexive.

backward caste, n. 1884–

= backward class, n.

intercaste, adj. 1908–

officer caste, n. 1931–

Scheduled Caste, n. 1933–

(In India and Pakistan, an official designation for) any of various hereditary groups or castes, traditionally regarded as being outside the varna...

casteist, adj. & n. 1952–

A person who is prejudiced, antagonistic, or discriminatory towards a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular caste...

forward caste, n. 1957–

(In India) a socially or economically privileged section of the population; an upper caste; frequently in plural; cf. backward caste, n.